

# Testimonial #1

Cheryl Barnett  
10 Mondays

St. Catherine of Alexandria  
Riverside, CA

The St. Catherine's of Alexandria, Riverside weekly bulletin had an announcement inviting the women of the parish to attend a newly formed women's group. It was 1996 and the beginning of my 20 year friendship and love of the Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women. The announcement was eye catching for me for two reasons. The first was that I was privately yearning for a close, personal relationship with Our Lord. I really did not know what that meant for me I just knew that I wanted something different—something **more** within the practice of my Catholic faith. The second reason was that the bulletin mentioned the leader and foundress was Patricia Scileppi. I did not know Pat personally at that time but I knew of her through others and of her excellence in teaching. So when I saw that name again, Patricia Scileppi, in that bulletin, there was an inner voice telling me to make the call and find out what this group was about. I said to myself, "Could it be what I am longing for?" And so, I made the call and showed up at the very next meeting.

Our meetings and Fellowship events then were very much as they are today. There are so many special times and stories, but one in particular in which I have such fond memories was in portraying St. Francis Xavier Cabrini in our enactment of "Tea with the Saints" Women's Day 2000, Invitation to Holiness. There were seven of us Saints. We studied about the life of our own "Saint" and had costumes made to reflect the clothes she wore. Our practice was a presentation to the Fellowship and then finally Women's Day arrived and there we were on stage, drinking tea and talking to each other about things in the lives and times of those we were portraying. I immediately developed a relationship with Mother Cabrini. I have continued to be in communion with her as I call on her often and in very diverse situations to ask for her intercession for my petitions. They seem to always be granted and I am richly blessed.

I remember four of us women sitting in Pat's living room in 1997 making plans for the next year's study when Judy Hubbard said, "let's have a Women's Day." We talked about what it might entail and asked ourselves "would anyone come." And so the work began on our first Women's Day to be held in May, 1998. It bears mentioning that Janet O'Neil accepted the call to be in charge of Marketing and single handedly called and/or faxed a letter to **every** Parish in the Diocese inviting their women to come. In that we were truly a grass root movement! That first Women's Day was so uplifting and full of hope and love and today it is so gratifying that Women's Day has become an important and long lasting spiritual event.

My memories and those of others remind us that we are not here by chance, But by God's choosing. For me, 20 years ago began the friendship and love of many beautiful and spirit filled women "who are led by God with our Lady's guidance" and who ARE --The Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women.

My Love and God Blessings To You All.